

SN. 10/670,158

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. KIOI:038

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 remain pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration. Claims 1-3 have been amended to improve their form by globally correcting the usage "input," and adding "wherein" at the beginning of the last paragraph of claim 3. No new matter has been introduced.

Allowable Claims

Claims 2 and 3 have been allowed. Applicants submit that claims 4-14 ultimately depending from allowed claims 2 and 3 are also allowable. Presently, as applicants believe that claim 1 is also allowable, claims 4, 6, and 7 have been maintained as depending from claim 1, 2, or 3.

Art Rejection

Claims 1 and 4-14 (depending from claim 1) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Watanabe (USP 6,161,427). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection, as e Watanabe does not disclose at least the claimed rapid deceleration determining unit.

Claim 1 calls for a rotation sensor that generates a vehicle speed pulse signal in synchronism with the vehicle speed, an elapsed time measuring unit that measures **an elapsed time from the time the vehicle speed pulse signal is input**, a vehicle speed calculating unit that calculates the vehicle speed from the interval of the vehicle speed pulse signal, a vehicle speed memory unit that stores the determined vehicle speed at a prior predetermined time, a deceleration pulse interval calculating unit that calculates a pulse interval corresponding to a predetermined deceleration relative to the determined vehicle speed at the prior predetermined time stored by the vehicle speed memory unit, and a rapid deceleration determining unit that determines rapid deceleration of the vehicle by **comparing the measured elapsed time with the pulse interval calculated by the deceleration pulse interval calculating unit**. [Emphasis added]. When the elapsed time is longer than the calculated pulse interval, the rapid deceleration determining unit determines that the vehicle has rapidly decelerated.

According to claim 1, as the deceleration determining unit compares the elapsed time from the vehicle speed pulse signal input with the calculated decelerating pulse interval, it does not need to wait for the next pulse signal to determine whether the vehicle is rapidly decelerating. Note that the deceleration pulse interval calculating unit calculates the deceleration pulse interval corresponding to a predetermined deceleration relative to the determined vehicle speed at the prior predetermined time. As a result, even when the vehicle

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speed is low, where the pulse interval from the rotation sensor is longer, the rapid deceleration of the vehicle can be determined while awaiting the input of the next pulse signal.

Watanabe would not have disclosed or taught comparing the measured elapsed time with any calculated pulse interval. Indeed, Watanabe explicitly states that "when the pulse cycle PROD is obtained in the present process, it is immediately compared with this threshold value CLTPROD, and when it is equal to or greater than the threshold value CLTPROD, the lockup clutch 12A is immediately released. See column 7, lines 43-48. The pulse cycle PROD is a time cycle of the pulse signal (i.e., a pulse period) from the vehicle sensor and the threshold value CLTPROD corresponds to a predetermined acceleration. See column 5, lines 43-59. Watanabe compares the time cycle of the vehicle speed pulse signal, as opposed to the elapsed time from the vehicle speed pulse signal, with a predetermined threshold acceleration. To determine the time cycle of the vehicle speed pulse signal, Watanabe has to wait for another pulse signal from its vehicle speed sensor, similar to the prior art described in the Background of the present specification. Accordingly, applicants submit that Watanabe would not have anticipated or taught claim 1.

#### Conclusion

Applicants submit that claims 1-14 are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

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